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BOOK REVIEWS.

STUDIES IN GENERAL HISTORY. BY MARY D. SHELDON, formerly Professor of History in Wellesley College. Student's Edition. Pp. 556. Boston, D. C. Heath & Co., 1890.

STUDIES IN AMERICAN HISTORY. BY MARY SHELDON BARNES, A. B., and EARL BARNES, M. S., Professor of the History and Art of Education in the Leland Stanford, Jr., University. Pp. 431. Boston, D. C. Heath & Co., 1891.

Those who have had occasion to note the woeful inefficiency of the usual methods of teaching history, and the great difficulty of the problem presenting itself to the teacher who strives to give the study of history a real educational value, will be thankful to Mrs. Barnes, for conscientiously working out a new solution. It is probable that a more careful analysis of the intent of historical study than has hitherto been made will show that the effects upon the mind are so various and so complex as to preclude the possibility of attaining any one system which will produce every desirable effect. In judging the plan followed in the books before us, those inclined to question its value ought always to keep in mind the great weakness, from an educational standpoint, of the ordinary system of presenting the facts of general history.

Mrs. Barnes is not one, as Voltaire says, *qui ne veut mettre que des faits dans sa memoire*. Dissatisfied with the old vague conceptions of history as a means of education, she bases her new method upon the belief that the aim of the study of history is "to train the pupil to think for himself and enter into living sympathy with others." (American Hist. iii.) In order to realize these ends, she begins in the schools where our universities leave off, by giving the pupil as material for his study the *historical sources*. "It is," the writer claims, "only by dealing with the sources of past history, that our pupils can be rightly trained to deal with

the historic sources of their own time, and to form independent and unprejudiced judgments concerning the mass of opinions, actions, institutions, and social products of all sorts in which he finds himself involved. In other words, whatever else our young people will become, citizens they must be; and the citizen must constantly form judgments of the historical sort, which can only be based upon contemporary sources. To enable him to do this should, perhaps, be the primary aim of the study of history."

The "sources" themselves as a subject of study have incontestably four great advantages over the mere second-hand statement based upon them: (1) They exercise the judgment of the student; (2) they enlist his sympathy in the actors; (3) they stimulate the pupil's curiosity; and lastly, (4) they furnish the dramatic element which makes distant events vivid and produces a lasting impression upon the mind. Nothing will make all this so clear as a comparison, let us say between what Prof. Fisher says in an excellent work of its kind* on the religion and morality of the Egyptians and the quotations given by Mrs. Barnes to illustrate the same subject.

Those who are familiar with the merits of the "Studies in General History" will be disappointed, however, in the way some important epochs in the history of our own country are treated in the more recent book. The Studies in American History, are to the extent of half the volume, devoted to the period preceding the formation of the Federal Constitution. The War of 1812 is treated in a way which leaves a very false impression upon the student's mind as does the account of our war with Mexico. These defects are by no means inherent in the system, and they could easily be corrected by shifting the point of view.

J. H. R.

SPANISH INSTITUTIONS OF THE SOUTHWEST. By Frank W. Blackmar, Ph. D., Professor of History and Sociology in the Kansas State University. Pp. xxvi., 353. Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1891.

Under the designation of studies in institutions, an assumed new school of historical students has for some years,

* Outlines of Universal History, p. 38.